

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

- [4] The lid is connected to a holding element movable in a guide rail of the roof module to ensure stable guidance of the lid. The holding element is connected to the front edge of the lid as seen in direction of travel and the rear edge of the lid. To ensure that the lid can be moved sufficiently to the rear and completely clear the roof opening, despite the fact that the holding element is provided at the rear edge of the lid, the roof module includes a slot ~~which~~that can receive the holding element. An elastically deformable seal is provided to seal the slot and to prevent excessive wind noise, strong ingress of water, and soiling. The seal is mounted at the lateral edge of the slot and is locally urged to the side by the holding element when the holding element ~~immerses~~enters into the slot.
- [5] A disadvantage of the known construction is that the flexible seal does not completely cover the slot and is not completely flush. Additionally, it is difficult to adapt the color of the seal to the color of the roof module. This can be a drawback if there are high quality requirements on the ~~optical~~visual appearance of the seal. The object of the invention consists in developing a roof module as mentioned above to the effect that even the high optical appearance requirements can be satisfied.
- [6] The roof module of the present invention includes a rigid covering element movable between a closed position ~~in which~~where the covering element closes a slot and an open position ~~in which~~where the covering element clears the slot to allow entry of a holding element of the lid. The rigid covering element can terminate flush with the edges of the slot. The covering element can be adapted to the ~~course~~contour of the outer skin and can also extend in a three-dimensionally curved form. The covering element is dimensionally stable, and the precision of the termination with the edges of the slot is also maintained over a long period of operation and is not subjected to wear.

- [7] Preferably, in the open position, the covering element is disposed below the outer skin by a connecting link guide mounted below the outer skin. The covering element is movable in the connecting link guide. This allows the covering element to be easily moved under the outer skin where the covering element neither disturbs the ~~optical~~ visual appearance of the roof module nor causes wind noise, for example.
- [10] The covering element can be made of any suitable material having a low weight and that provides the desired high dimensional stability, such as metal or ~~plasties~~ plastic. Therefore, the covering element can easily be painted. If the covering element is made of ~~plasties~~ plastic, it can also be dyed.
- [23] Figure 1 shows a roof module 10 having a first lid 12, a second lid 14, and a stationary roof element 16. The first and second lids 12 and 14 are moveable between a closed position (as shown in Figure 1) ~~in which~~ where the lids 12 and 14 close a roof opening 18 of the vehicle, and an open position (as shown in Figures 2 and 3), ~~in which~~ where the lids 12 and 14 clear the roof opening 18. In the open position, the second lid 14 lies below the stationary roof element 16 and the first lid 12 lies above the stationary roof element 16.
- [26] Figure 4 shows a slot 28 proceeding from the roof opening 18 and located between the stationary roof element 16 and the portion of the outer skin 22 disposed laterally of the stationary roof element 16. The slot 28 extends as far to the rear as required for the rear holding element 26 to move the first lid 12 to the open position.
- [28] The covering element 30 can be made of any suitable material having a low weight and that provides the desired high dimensional stability, such as metal (Figure 6) or plastic (Figure 8). Therefore, the covering element 30 can easily be painted. If the covering element 30 is made of plastics, it can also be dyed.

[29] Two seals 36 are mounted on the body 32 of the covering element 30 and another two seals 38 are mounted laterally on the strip 34. Alternately, each seal can be a circumferential seal. The seals 36 and 38 rest against the bottom surface of the outer skin 22 when the covering element 30 is in the closed position. Two drip rails 40 are provided around the strip 34 in which water can collect and, despite the seals 36, enter through the ~~gap~~slot 28 into the space between the outer skin 22 and the covering element 30. Alternately, a single circumferential drip rail can be utilized. An outlet (not shown) can also be provided to discharge collected water in a controlled way.

[32] Figure 9 shows the covering element 30 moved to the rear by about half the maximum possible distance. The covering element 30 can be moved until the first connecting link bolt 48 reaches the end of the first connecting link 44 in the position 48' as shown in Figure 9. In this completely open position, the slot 28 is completely cleared, allowing the two holding elements 24, 26 to freely enter into the slot ~~22~~28.